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# Bryn Mawr Classical Review

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**P. Huby, C. Steel, J.O. Urmson, P. Lautner, *Priscian, On Theophrastus on Sense-Perception and Simplicius' On Aristotle's On the Soul 2.5-12. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.***

**Reviewed by Inna Kupreeva, University of Toronto ([kupreeva@chass.utoronto.ca](mailto:kupreeva@chass.utoronto.ca))**

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The two texts published in this volume of "Aristotelian Commentators on Aristotle", Priscian's paraphrase of Theophrastus' treatise on sense-perception and the corresponding sections of the *de anima* commentary traditionally attributed to Simplicius, come from the Neoplatonic school, written around the same time, most likely in the second quarter the sixth century.<sup>1</sup>

The source of Priscian's *Metaphrasis* is Theophrastus' *Physics*, a work in eight books, of which the fourth and the fifth were on psychology. It is hard to say how much of the content of Theophrastus' treatise has been replaced rather than supplanted by the Neoplatonic interpretation, but from what is extant it is possible to see that the internal structure of Theophrastus' treatise is defined by scholastic articulation of Aristotelian positions and assembling *quaestiones disputatae* around the main topics. This pattern allows Priscian to use Theophrastus' text as a "matrix" in which to expound Iamblichus' doctrine of the soul.

The Greek text of Theophrastean fragments can be consulted in the second volume of a new critical edition.<sup>2</sup> The current publication contains (in the notes) a concordance of places with this edition, with Aristotle's *de anima*, updated bibliographical references and critical notes. This makes this translation a useful research tool for the Theophrastean studies, as well as giving an opportunity for a reader to see the way in which the fragments appear in the source.

Part of the reason why the two texts are published in one volume is that according to the view defended by Prof. Steel in the introduction to his translation Priscian is the author of the *de anima* commentary. This view was put forward thirty years ago by him and Prof. Bossier in a joint article;<sup>3</sup> but as they discovered, this point has already been made in print, as early as in 1608, by Francesco Piccolomini, who suggested Priscian's authorship on stylistic grounds.<sup>4</sup> Steel and Bossier argued that apart from style there are doctrinal differences between the *de anima* and other commentaries attributed to Simplicius. Steel in his dissertation, published as a book in 1978,<sup>5</sup> suggested that there was a revival of the Iamblichus' influence in the latest period of the Platonic school in Athens. He discussed in detail the tension between the two interpretations of the doctrine of the soul's descent: according to the theory of Iamblichus, the soul in its descent undergoes a substantial change, while according to the theory of Proclus, which is somewhat closer to the view found in Plotinus, the soul undergoes change as regards its activities but not in its substance.<sup>6</sup> Steel argues that Damascius in his *Parmenides* commentary, in the interpretation of the third

hypothesis, chooses to follow Iamblichus rather than Proclus,<sup>7</sup> and that the same tendency is found in the *de anima* commentary, to whose author Steel 1978 refers, without reservations, as to Priscian.<sup>8</sup>

In his introduction to the present volume Steel reproduces the argument of Steel-Bossier 1972, adding some new observations. In the first part of his introduction Steel argues against the traditional attribution of the commentary, on the grounds of method, vocabulary, style, cross-references and doctrine; and in the second part he argues for the attribution to Priscianus.

With regard to method, Steel notes that the *de anima* commentary is more tendentious and less erudite than the other commentaries by Simplicius. The author of the *de anima*, like Simplicius, defends Plato and Pre-Socratics from Aristotle's criticism but does not quote the primary sources in support of his defence and thus "... lacks the sense of historical documentation which so characterises Simplicius".<sup>9</sup> This feature of *in de anima* is noticed also by Piccolomini. But, as I. Hadot warns in her 1978 discussion, one should distinguish between the differences of method which are grounded in the author's personality and those that due to the subject matter. She suggests that *Physics*, *De Caelo* and *Categories* provide a "more neutral ground"<sup>10</sup> for a Platonic commentator, while psychology is the subject where disagreement is greatest and most difficult to conceal, which might explain the more tendentious character of the commentary. She also notes that the *Enchiridion* commentary, whose authorship is not questioned, displayed the same comparative lack of erudition as *in de anima*.<sup>11</sup> Both points seem to be valid and both need to be addressed in the fuller version of the argument.

Steel marks several features of vocabulary in which the *de anima* commentary differs from the other commentaries of Simplicius: the term ἐπεξεργάζεσθαι in the meaning "examine, investigate thoroughly" is not used by Simplicius, but is used by Priscian; so are the verbs ἐρῶ and φήσω as interjections. Other characteristic terms used in *de anima* are: ἀναίνομαι ("refuse, reject"), ἵσταμαι κατά, χαλάω (in the metaphoric sense of loosening), ἀποστενῶ, ὑφίζάνω (in the metaphorical sense); the adjective διεξοδικός, ἀνέλιξις; the terms ὅρος and (δι)ορίζω used in an ontological rather than purely logical sense. The parallel usages, while missing in Simplicius, are found in Priscian, Iamblichus and Damascius. On the other hand, Simplicius' characteristic expressions αὐθυπόστατον (in the description of "the hypostatic Intellect") and ὅλον ὅλω ἐφαρμόττειν (referring to "the self-reflection of the soul") never occur in the *de anima*.<sup>12</sup> (*ibid.*)

Steel notes, without extensive elaboration, difference in syntax between Simplicius' commentaries and *de anima*. He also points out the difference in the organisation of lemmata in two cases: while the lemmata of the attested commentaries are full fragments of the Aristotelian text with boundaries clearly marked, usually by means of an ἕως τοῦ construction, the commentary on *de anima* does not seem to have a rigid division between the commented texts and the commentary: lemmata are not self-contained fragments, which is shown by the fact that they are often grammatically parts of longer periods of the commentary. This organisation of the text is certainly closer to that of Priscian's *Metaphrasis*.

With regard to the doctrines, Steel acknowledges that it is difficult to compare *de anima* with the other works by Simplicius, because psychology is not discussed in other commentaries, but he thinks it is still possible to indicate the main differences, which are

multiply attested. Steel considers three groups of differences: in the psychological doctrine, in logical terminology, and miscellaneous.

Differences of the first group include the following:

- (a) In the *de anima* commentary the distinction between the moving and formal aspects of soul as entelechy is described with prepositional constructions, respectively, τὸ ὑφ' οὗ and τὸ καθ' ὃ, never used by Simplicius in this role. In fact the latter seems to deny that nature is the καθ' ὃ principle of the bodies -- in *phys.* 289, 4-13.[13](#)
- (b) Peculiar interpretation of αὐτοκίνητον, according to which αὐτο- stands for the immobile, and κίνητον for the moving part of the compound, never occurs in Simplicius.[14](#)
- (c) Iamblichean thesis of substantial change of the soul is found in the in *de anima*, but not otherwise in Simplicius.[15](#)
- (d) The doctrine of "projection outwards of the soul" (προβολή) is absent from Simplicius, together with the terminology of προβάλλειν.[16](#)

The following differences are listed in the second group:

- (a) The term ἐδράζω used in the *de anima* commentary to characterise substance but never used in this context by Simplicius.
- (b) The expression κατὰ βάθος διαφορᾶ ("difference in depth") referring to 'analogical' predication, is found in *de anima* but not in otherwise in Simplicius.
- (c) There is different treatment of constitutive and divisive differences by the author of the *de anima* and by the author of *in categ.* (the differentiae "perishable" and "imperishable" are treated by Simplicius in *in categ.* as divisive of the genus "animal", while the author of the *de anima* commentary treats them as divisive with respect to being, but constitutive with respect to "animal".)

The third group consists of the following cases:

- (a) Simplicius in the commentary on *Physics* VIII says that all the movers of the heavenly spheres are totally unmoved, while the author of the *de anima* says, referring to the commentary on *Physics* VIII, that only the first mover is unmoved while the movers of the spheres are moved accidentally.
- (b) The transcendent cause cannot be called "efficient" according to *in de anima*, but the divine intellect is described as an "efficient" cause in *in phys.*
- (c) The term εἰδησις is explained in the *de anima* 6, 22 as "scientific understanding", and as the general concept of knowledge subsuming scientific understanding as one of its kinds, in *in categ.*

Finally, the self-references in the *de anima* commentary provide important evidence for the problem of authorship. Our author refers six times to his previous works:

- (1) once (136, 29) to the *Epitome* of the Theophrastus' *Physics*; there is no such work by Simplicius, but Steel says the reference is most certainly to the *Metaphrasis* of Priscian;

(2) twice (28, 20 and 217, 27) to the *Metaphysics* commentary. No such work by Simplicius is extant, although there is some indirect and problematic evidence that Simplicius must have written such work.[17](#)

(3) three times to the *Physics* commentary (35, 10-15; 120, 24; 198, 5). But the comparison of the references with the relevant sections of Simplicius' *Physics* commentary "shows ... a divergence in content and expression" (p.120, Steel).[18](#)

Steel addresses the hypothesis which would explain the stylistic and doctrinal differences of the *de anima* commentary by the evolution of the author (Piccolomini, Torstrik). His arguments against this explanation are two: (1) there are no traces of evolution between the other commentaries, and the *de anima* commentary would in this respect stand rather separately;[19](#) (2) the doctrinal evolution does not explain the differences in style.

In the second part of his article Steel develops the arguments for the thesis that Priscian is the author of the *de anima* commentary.

The main argument for this attribution is based on the cross-reference (at 136, 29) to the *Epitome* of Theophrastus' *Physics*. The context is the discussion of the function of the transparent medium in *de anima* II 7: 419a13-19. The text in the *Metaphrasis* 8, 1-15, 5 displays a very exact parallel to the text of the commentary, (which was noticed by Piccolomini). Steel (pp. 128-131) gives a comparison between the two texts, Priscian 1, 11-2, 6 and 'Simplicius' 125, 25-34, arguing that both the formulation of the problem and the style suggest that the passage of *Metaphrasis* is the object of reference to the *Epitome* in the *de anima* commentary.[20](#) Steel suggests that the extant *Metaphrasis* is a fragment of the *Epitome* of Theophrastus, *Physics*, of which Priscian is the author (Steel 1997, pp.134-5).

With regard to the third part of the *Metaphrasis*, devoted to the intellect, Steel observes that there are many affinities in vocabulary between it and the *de anima* commentary, but also a difference in that Priscian identifies νοῦς ἐνεργεῖα with the unparticipated divine intellect and the νοῦς δυνάμει with the participated intellect, while the author of the *de anima* commentary is very much opposed to treating the active intellect of *de anima* as transcendent. Steel accounts for this difference by the 'evolutionary' view of Priscian, assuming that Priscian in the earlier *Metaphrasis* is more faithful in reproducing the Iamblichean doctrine of the active intellect, showing more independence from Iamblichus in the commentary.[21](#)

In conclusion Steel lists four possible hypotheses which could explain the similarities in content and diction between the two texts: (1) the *de anima* commentary plagiarises the *Metaphrasis*; this is rejected, because in this case, Steel says, the "seams" between the two works would have been visible; for the same reason he rejects hypothesis (2), that *Metaphrasis* plagiarises the commentary; (3) the authors of both works have a common source, conceivably, Iamblichus *de anima*. Against this hypothesis he notes that (a) the comparison of two texts shows that the author of the commentary was working with the text of the *Metaphrasis* (and not the common source); (b) the parallel sections cannot be isolated from the main body of both texts; (c) neither of the texts quotes Iamblichus *ad litteram*. So, the most plausible hypothesis is (4) that the two works must be attributed to the same author, namely, Priscian.[22](#)



Steel's claim and arguments have been much discussed since the 1972 article. I. Hadot in 1978, working from a different perspective (criticism of Praechter's hypothesis of "two schools", Athenian and Alexandrian, in the sixth century Platonism) reviewed the article and provided several objections some of which are mentioned above. She agreed that there may be stylistic grounds to suspect the traditional attribution but opposed the idea of different authorship on doctrinal grounds.<sup>23</sup> In 1982 H.J. Blumenthal suggested, though without addressing the argument of Steel 1978 in detail, that the notion of 'substantial change' in *de anima* commentary should not be taken in a strong sense and suggested two alternative hypotheses which could make possible the attribution of the commentary to Simplicius: first, that the relative poverty of historical documentation in the *de anima* could be explained by the author's not having a library at his disposal; second, that the commentary, unlike the other commentaries of Simplicius, is a redaction of his work by one of his students, while his other commentaries are not.<sup>24</sup> In his last book, returning to the argument of Steel and Bossier,<sup>25</sup> Blumenthal seems inclined to give more weight to the stylistic considerations and suggests that the person who composed it was not Simplicius. But this does not imply for him that the commentary was written by Priscian or any other of the already known commentators. Apart from the already mentioned possibility of it being an ἀπὸ φωνῆς redaction of lectures, Blumenthal suggests it might be a product of the "school of Damascius", written by one of his students. With regard to the argumentum crucis, which is the cross-reference to the *Epitome*, Blumenthal notes that the textual coincidences *per se* cannot be regarded as safe evidence of any kind, because they are a very normal fact in the late Aristotelian commentaries.<sup>26</sup> All those who discussed the Priscian-hypothesis have also noticed that no verdict on authorship will be competent before a tolerably comprehensive stylistic analysis of relevant texts is done.<sup>27</sup>

My goal in reviewing this argument and objections was to familiarise myself and hopefully some of the readers with the *status quaestionis*; I am certainly not prepared to "referee" the debate in any sense. In fact I should prefer not to even describe this discussion as "debate", for this term is associated with the stage at which all the research has been done, all the main evidence laid out clearly, and the sides clearly taken on all the main points. But in our case there is a cluster of hard problems, historical, philosophical, textual, energetically tackled from different standpoints (*Iamblichus redivivus*; doctrinal history and the centres of learning -- Athens and Alexandria, lately 'Harran hypothesis';<sup>28</sup> interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrines); and the facts and hypotheses keep coming.<sup>29</sup>

The main claim of Steel 1978, which is related to his approach to the authorship question, was that there is a tension between Proclean and Iamblichean theories of the soul's descent and that this tension is perceived by the leading figures of the Platonic school in the sixth century. This claim as such is not disputed by anyone. The fact of Iamblichean influence at this time is also not likely to be contested by those familiar with the Simplicius commentaries, and it is difficult to deny that the *de anima* commentary is somehow very distinct in the way in which it presents the doctrines. The question is, of course, what all these facts can tell us about the history of the school, and the Priscian-hypothesis seems to be one possible construal of the events.

The authorship hypotheses are a good thing, particularly because they are necessarily followed by testing which can bring new findings and insights. This discussion has already uncovered a considerable mass of new material, as well as new problems for the scholars to look at so it seems to be quite profitable for the state of affairs in the field. It is all the more

important for that reason not to turn it into "debate" prematurely and not to regard any of the questions "closed" before the necessary evidence has been collected and all the due evaluations made.

It may be added that Prof. Steel's analysis of style consists mostly of the analysis of technical terminology which is clearly dependent on more factors than the author's personality (cf. Hadot above). A more standard type of analysis, covering more neutral features of grammar, usage and composition, could probably usefully complement the research already done. Another thing that probably should be done if the attribution to Priscian is taken seriously, is an adequate study of the *solutiones ad chosroem*.

Prof. Steel's introduction certainly adds to the attractiveness of this volume: the Bossier-Steel argument was much discussed in the past three decades, but never, to my knowledge, stated in English by its authors. Here we finally have all the evidence and all the reasoning "authorised". But even apart from the "hot" topic of authorship, the edition has many features that recommend it to scholars, students and all those interested in ancient philosophy of mind. Both texts are good illustrations of the late Neoplatonic theory of sense-perception; having them in a recent English translation, put "side by side", analysed and supplied with critical notes and references to the recent work in the field, should be helpful to those involved in research and those who are just beginning their studies.

Both translations are accurate and reliable. The methods employed by the translators are different: Prof. Huby tends to preserve the structure of Greek periods in English, whereas Prof. Steel's is more conforming to the English idiomatic syntax, thus "breaking up" the long sentences and shifting connectives.

The text of the *Metaphrasis* in this edition is divided into sections by topics. I wonder if it would have been possible to put at least some of the *apparatus fontium* (references to Aristotle's *de anima* and perhaps, though not necessarily, to Theophrastus, fragments) into the footnotes rather than endnotes. In case of "layered" texts, like the commentaries, which continuously refer to several older sources, it might be convenient for a reader to have a reference to the source on the same page with the commentary. The *de anima* commentary is divided as in Hayduck's edition, but the lemmata are supplanted, in brackets, by more material from the Aristotelian *de anima*. This I find somewhat disruptive for the process of reading: the reader is forced to first "add" and then "subtract" the portions of the text which do not belong to the commentary. This does not seem warranted, especially given what we already know about the specifics of 'Simplicius' lemmata. Again, a "suggestion for the second edition" would be to give the supplanted material in the footnotes on the same page (and probably better in one of the standard translations of *de anima*); this would make the edition more reader-friendly.

Each of the texts is provided with an English-Greek Glossary and Greek-English Index. The *Metaphrasis* has a useful index of places, and the *de anima* commentary a brief index of names and subjects.

On the whole, it is a lot of work, and we should certainly be grateful to all the scholars who took part in it for making these difficult and important texts available in English.

I append some notes on the details of text and translation. Page references are to the volumes of CAG, unless noted otherwise.

**Metaphrasis.**

2, 3: διὸ οὐδὲ πάθος τὸ ὅλον: "hence neither is the whole <sensation>, etc." rather than "hence neither is the whole thing, etc."?

2, 14: διὸ οὐκ ἄνευ μὲν τοῦ ἐν τῷ αἰσθητηρίῳ παθήματος, οὐ μὴν τοῦτο ἡ αἴσθησις, ὅθεν καὶ πάσχοντες καθεύδοντες τε καὶ ἐγρηγοροῦντες ἐνίοτε οὐκ ἐπαισθανόμεθα: "For which reason, though not without an affection in the sense-organ, yet sensation is not this [*scil.* affection]: this is why sometimes we do not feel any sensation even when affected, in sleep or awake". Rather than: "Hence it is not independent of the effect in the sense-organ, and yet this is not perception for this reason: even though we are affected we are sometimes not conscious <of it>, both when sleeping and when awake".

2, 18 (text): τὸ δὲ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ εἶδος τοῦτο δὴ οὐκ ἐν τῷ αἰσθητηρίῳ: insert comma after εἶδος (and translate accordingly). NOTE 34: ad 'Simpl.' 126, 9: ἀποστενύω itself is not poetic, it is only the form ἀποστενύνω (with diphthongised root vowel) that is marked as poetic in LSJ. In 'Simpl.' "contracted" probably gives a better sense than "straitened".

3, 5 (syntax): τὸ γὰρ κρῖνον ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ σύνεσις κατὰ τὴν αἰσθητικὴν ψυχὴν: "For *logos* is the discerning and the comprehension, etc." rather than: "For that which is aware is the *logos* and the synthesis connected with the sensitive soul, etc."

3, 6 TEXT (and NOTE 38): reverting Ficino's emendation of σύνθεσις to σύνεσις is very unlikely (cf. also 3, 16).

4, 18 (syntax): εἰς ἑνία γε μὴν ἐκ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἡ διάνοια ἀναγομένη αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν λογίζεται οὐκέτι ὄντα τῇ αἰσθήσει καταληπτὰ, ὥς ὅταν τὴν οὐσίαν γνωρίζῃ τῶν αἰσθητῶν. "When thought has been risen to a certain stage from the sensible objects, it by itself ratiocinates about things which are no longer grasped by sense, etc." (Rather than: "It is true however that thought, being withdrawn itself by itself, reasons with regard to some <aspects> of the objects of sense which are not apprehensible by sense, etc.")

4, 25: οὐπω: "not yet" rather than "no longer".

5, 11: ὥς οὐ μία οὖσα ... ἡ αἴσθησις εἰδοποιεῖται διαφόρως ὑπὸ τῶν μετεχόντων ὀργάνων, κτλ.: "It is not the case that sense, being one, is fashioned into different kinds by participating organs" (Rather than: "Sense is not one single thing ... which is differentiated into various kinds by participating organs". Priscian accepts the unity of sense: the question is only at which stage the differentiation happens. The translation as given may mislead the reader into thinking that he denied the unity.)

5, 14 (syntax): ἡ αἴσθησις μί' οὖσα καθ' αὐτὴν καὶ εἰς πέντε μεμέρισται: "but the sense itself, being of itself one, is also divided into five" rather than: "but sense itself, being one, of itself is also divided into five".

5, 17-19: τοῦ γὰρ ὕλικου καὶ ὀργανικοῦ μερισμοῦ προηγεῖται ἡ εἰδητικὴ καὶ ἐν τοῖς χρωμένοις ἐτερότης. "The material and instrumental division is preceded by the difference in form and in the users [*scil.* of the instruments]" rather than: "The formal variety takes precedence over the material division connected with the sense-organs, and is more important to their users". ἐν τοῖς χρωμένοις is grammatically parallel to ἡ εἰδητικὴ: the former answers ὀργανικοῦ and the latter τοῦ ... ὕλικου; on this see Steel, Introduction, p. 117.



6, 13: NOTE 72: the reference should be to *Metaphysics* 12, not 7.

6, 28: ἵχνος τι φωτὸς ἀμυδρὸν τελειοῦν καὶ τὸ μεταξὺ πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν: "some faint trace of light that also perfects the medium for vision" rather than: "some obscure trace of light, which also fills up the gap involved in sight"?

9, 3: ἐκεῖνο ἴσως ἐνδεικνύμενος: "*perhaps* indicating that" rather than "showing this *equally*" (cf. further, 9, 6). The same at 15, 8; 15, 23. (That this qualification of Theophrastus' thought is so relatively frequent, might give us an additional idea of the style of Theophrastus' work).

9, 8: ἕτερον μὲν τὸ αἰτιατὸν φῶς, ἕτερον δὲ τὸ τούτου αἴτιον: "The caused light is one thing, and [the light] which is the cause of this one, is another" rather than: "The caused light is one thing and its cause another" (understand τὸ <φῶς> τούτου αἴτιον).

9, 25: (p.18 of the English translation): no angled brackets around "of the transparent" (it is in the Greek text). (Typographical error.)

11, 11 (syntax): περιουσία αὕτη τοῦ τε πρώτως ὁρατοῦ, ὃ δὴ τὸ φῶς εἶναι φαμεν, τὸ καὶ ἄλλα ἅττα ὁρατὰ ἐπιτελεῖν, καὶ τῆς ὁρατικῆς δυνάμεως, οὐ τοῦ φωτὸς μόνου, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐτέρων τινῶν διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αἰσθανομένης: "This is an advantage of *both* the first visible, which we say light is, to complete all other visibles, *and* of the faculty of sight, which perceives not only light, but also some other things due to light" rather than: "It is a superiority of the primary visible, which, you know, we say to be light, that it perfects other kinds of visibles, with the faculty of seeing being aware not only of light but also of other things through light".

13, 1: καὶ γὰρ ἡ φωνὴ ἐνέργειά ἐστιν ἀμέριστος πανταχοῦ ὅλη ἡ αὕτη χωριστῶς αὐτῷ παροῦσα, ἅτε μήτε συμφερομένη μήτε συναλλοιουμένη τῷ ἀέρι: "For sound, too, is the activity, which is present in the air undivided, as a whole everywhere the same, as a separate thing, because it is neither moved nor altered along with it" rather than: "For sound is also an activity which is present in it <the transparent> undivided, as a whole everywhere the same, as a separate thing, in that it is neither carried along together with the air nor altered along with it". (αὐτῷ in the first clause referring to τῷ ἀέρι in the second.)

17, 28: ἐπισημαίνεται: "notes" rather than "approves <saying>"?

21, 11: καὶ τῇ ἀσυμμέτρῳ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ προσβολῇ διαλυοῦση τὴν δεκτικὴν τοῦ λόγου ἐν αὐτῷ ἐπιτηδειότητα is rendered as "incongruent application of the object of sense", but we could probably say, more specifically, "disproportionate impact".

24, 32-33: τοῦ σώματος συγκινουμένου ταῖς φαντασίαις: "when the body is stirred up by the processes of imagination" rather than "when the body is moved together with the images"?

25, 2: συστροφαι τῶν ὀμμάτων: denotes something like "rolling up" or "squinting", "the eyes", rather than "turning inward of our eyes"? (v. LSJ s.v. συστρέφω).

26, 8: <ἔστι> not translated.

26, 25: ἀκραιφνής, here and elsewhere (27, 1 etc.): "pure" (= "unmixed") rather than "inviolable" (LSJ gives the meaning "inviolate" as a synonym to "untouched").

28, 8 (syntax): εἰ καὶ δέχεσθαι δεοὶ φάναι ἀλλὰ μὴ προάγειν: "if at all one has to say 'receives' and not 'brings forth'" rather than "if we even ought to say that it receives <it> but does not bring <it> forward"?

28, 25: ἀξιοῖ: "thinks it worthy" rather than "asks <people>". Same at 28, 27.

29, 29: I wonder if the distinction between γινώσκειν and ἐπίστασθαι could not be captured without introducing *knowing* (1) and *knowing* (2), e.g. by consistent use of "cognise" and "know" (and an explanatory note). The distinction as put in the translation might mislead the readers of *de anima* who are familiar with first and second sense of knowledge in the Aristotelian example of "geometer" ("knower").

29, 30: καὶ πρὶν οὖν γινῶναι ἐστὶ τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ καὶ ταύτη μεμέρισται πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ μὴ τῇ οὐσίᾳ εἶναι ἐνέργεια, δευτέραν δὲ ἴσχειν καὶ προϊοῦσαν ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας ἐπιστημονικὴν ἐνέργειαν, ὥσπερ ἐστὶ καὶ ὅταν μὴ ἐπίσταιται, οὕτω καὶ τὰ πράγματά ἐστιν οὐκ ἐνεργητικῶς ἀλλ' οὐσιώδως. "Hence, it [the soul] is things prior to cognition. But even in this [i.e. in being something prior to cognition] the soul is somehow divided, because it is not an activity by its essence, but has the activity of knowing as secondary and proceeding from its essence. For this reason, *as it exists even when it does not know*, so it is things not as an activity but as an essence." Rather than: "And therefore before knowing<sup>1</sup>, it is things, but since by this fact the soul has also been divided in a way through not being an activity in its substance, but possessing a secondary cognitive<sup>2</sup> activity which proceeds from its substance, *as is also the case when it is not knowing<sup>2</sup>*, so also it is things not actively but in its substance".

Here ἡ ψυχὴ is the subject of each clause in this long sentence. The italicised sentence explains the reason why the soul is divided (rather than suggesting a contradictory state of its emanating the activity of knowledge even when not knowing, cf. Steel 1978, pp.137-138).

30, 2: οὐ τῷ εἶναι νοούμενα ἀλλὰ τῷ γνωστῶς ἐνεργεῖν: "which are thought not in virtue of their being, but in virtue of <their> acting in a cognisable way". Rather than: "they are not thought by being <them>, but by a cognitive (1) act". In the latter case, it would be difficult for a reader to attribute the "cognitive (1) act" to intelligibles as a subject.

30, 21-22: καθὰ ἀεὶ ἔστηκεν ἐν αὐτῇ τὰ πράγματα: "insofar as things are permanently fixed in it" rather than: "thanks to which things are always situated in it".

31, 8-9 (syntax): ὅταν γὰρ οὕτως ἕκαστα γένηται ὡς ἐπιστήμων κατ' ἐνέργειαν λέγεται: "For when it becomes particular things in the way in which the knower is said to be in actuality" rather than: "For when it has become each thing in the sense in which it is said to *know* (2) them in actuality". (Here we have indeed an allusion to Aristotle's example of an ἐπιστήμων in *de an.* II 5: 417a23, III 4: 429a6, etc., but the two clauses have different grammatical subjects.)

32, 25: ἐφεξῆς δὲ καὶ αὐτός, ὥσπερ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης, τιθέμενος ἓν μὲν ἅλλα τῶν εἰδῶν, ἐφ' ὧν ταῦτόν αὐτό τε ἕκαστον καὶ τὸ εἶναι αὐτῷ, τὸν γὰρ λόγον καὶ τὸ εἶδος τὸ εἶναι δηλοῖ, αὐτὸ δὲ τὴν ὅλην ὑπόστασιν. "Next, he too, like Aristotle, holding that some

of the forms are immaterial, in which case each particular one is identical with being it; where "being" stands for form and formula and "it" for the whole existent (or existence)". Rather than: "... holding that some of the forms are without matter and in these each is itself identical with its being <what it is>: for being <what it is> shows its logos and its form, and it in itself shows its whole nature (hypostasis)". Here the de dicto sense of δηλοῖ should be made very clear; otherwise, a reader may think that we are dealing here with a complex Neoplatonic doctrine of being "showing" the logos etc., whereas in fact the sentence is dry and exegetic.

### ***'Simplicius' On Aristotle's On the Soul 2.5-12***

In the list of emendations 127, 10 is listed as 128, 10.

117, 21: οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς τὸ περὶ γενέσεως σύγγραμμα καθόλου καλεῖ, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἐκεῖ ῥηθέντας περὶ τοῦ ποιεῖν καὶ πάσχειν λόγους. "It is not the treatise "On generation" simply that he calls 'general', but the arguments concerning acting and being affected developed in it". Rather than: "For he does not simply call the work On Generation 'general' but the discussion presented there is about acting on and being affected". (Syntax).

117, 28: ἢ ὅτι ζωτικὴ καὶ γνωστικὴ οὕσα ἐνέργεια οὔτε ἑαυτῆς οὔτε τῶν ὀργάνων ἐστὶν ἑαυτῆς, ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς ἐγειρομένη, καὶ ἐὰν μὴ κινηθῇ τὸ αἰσθητήριον παθὼν ὑπὸ τινος τῶν ἔξωθεν πρότερον. "Perhaps because being a vital and cognitive activity, it is not arousing either itself or its organs from itself and unless the sense-organ is moved, etc." Rather than: "Perhaps because an activity, although it is vital and cognitive, is not directed to either itself or its organs, although being self-aroused, etc." The thing is that sense-perception is *not* self-aroused, although its being vital and cognitive activity suggests that it should be such -- hence the aporia.

118, 1: τὸ κινεῖν τὰ σώματα: "to move bodies" rather than "to change bodies"? (probably "change" should be used with caution as an equivalent to κινεῖν in the contexts like ours, which are Platonic rather than purely Aristotelian).

Note 10 (ad 118, 4): "There is no such view to be found in his (Alexander's) extant works" (p.213). The reference in the text is probably not to a view, but to Alexander's exegesis of this occurrence of αἴσθησις. Alexander knows, as well as we ourselves, that in Aristotle αἴσθησις sometimes stands for a sense-organ and treats this place as one of such cases. That later commentators often used Alexander for the textual and exegetic *minutiae* is well-known.

120, 14: οὐκέτι: "no longer", or, here, "no further" rather than "not yet". (Same in the quotation on p.123.)

125, 17: ἢ οὐσιώδης: we have to understand "generation" (γένεσιν of line 16) rather than "affection".

126, 13-14: Hayduck's conjectured emendation (rather than text) is translated, which is not acknowledged in the apparatus.

128, 2: ὅτι οὐ καθὸ οὐσία not translated.

128, 32-33: οὐσία seems to have the same reference throughout the argument on lines 29-33 but is translated by two different terms ("substance" and "essence"). Would this be one of

those cases when translating it with neutral "being" is preferable?

129, 8: τελειοῦν "to perfect" rather than "to fill"?

130, 7: πᾶν not translated.

130, 18: ἐφ' οἷς: "after which", not "on this subject".

131, 36: ἡ μὲν οὖν ἀπλῇ τοῦ φωτὸς ιδιότης καὶ τῇ νοήσει ἡμῶν κατὰ ἀπλῆν ἐπιβολὴν ἐκ τῆς αἰσθήσεως γίνεται γνώριμος, ὅτι δὲ ἀσώματον καὶ ὅτι οὐ πάθος ἀλλ' ἐνέργεια, συλλογιζόμεθα, κτλ. "So the simple property of light becomes known to our intellection by simple intuition from perception; but [its attributes, i.e.] that it is incorporeal, and not an affection, but act, we infer, etc." Rather than: "So the simple property of light also becomes known to our intellection by simple intuition from perception. We reason that it is incorporeal and that it is not an affection but actuality, etc." The distinction between intuition and discursive reasoning, clearly pronounced in the Greek, is not in English. (This distinction might be also noticed in a comment in note 90, p.219.)

133, 27: ἀλλ' ὡς τελειωτικὴ αὐτοῦ: "but as the one that perfects it" rather than "is a perfection of it" (the distinction between the objective and possessive genitive is worth putting clearly).

135, 5: καὶ τοῦτο ἴδιον τοῦ ἄνευ φωτὸς διαφανοῦς τὸ ὅπως οὖν ὁρᾶσθαι, εἰ καὶ μὴ κατ' ἐπιβολήν, ὡς τὰ γε χρώματα ἀόρατα μὲν καὶ αὐτὰ χωρὶς φωτός, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πειρωμένοις ὁρᾶν παρέχεται ὅποιον αὐτῶν συναίσθησιν. "And this is a property of the unlit transparent, to be seen to some extent, even if not by direct intuition; as the colours, although they are also invisible without light, yet do not present any perception of themselves to those who are trying to see". Rather than: "Just as colours are themselves invisible without light, but yet when one is trying to see them, they do provide a kind of awareness of themselves". (With suggested emendation.) The point that our author seems to make is that the transparent can be seen in the dark, by the very fact of not seeing, while colours are not discerned *qua* colours in the dark, although the sight is active.

137, 11: ἀπαγορεύει: the subject is Aristotle, not πᾶν?

138, 23: τὸ ἀσύμμετρον: "incongruity", "incommensurability" here rather than "asymmetry" ("false friend!").

140, 18: τὰ γὰρ δεκτικὰ ὑλικά: "For the receptive [things] are material *causes*" rather than: "For what receive it are material *things*". (This could be very unclear for the efficient causes of sound are also material *things*. But the distinction is clearly made between the efficient causes and material causes.)

141, 32: καὶ οὕτω πάλιν ἡ διάδοσις ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτὰ τῆς πληγῆς καὶ τοῦ ψόφου γίνεται: "and in this way, again, happens the transmission back to the same place of strike and sound" rather than: "thus again the transmission of the blow and the sound happen in the same way".

141, 36: τίς: with Aldine reading (not marked in the list).

142, 7-9: ἀλλ' οὐ καθ' ὅλον ἑαυτὸν προηγουμένως, κατὰ δὲ τὸ πρὸς τῷ στερεῷ ἑαυτοῦ, μόριον, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς οἷον συμπάσχων, κτλ. "While the other parts as co-affected"?

rather than "while the other parts sympathise"? ("air" is the subject in the next two clauses).

144, 6: καθόλου: "generally" (i.e. both not productive and not receptive) rather than "throughout".

144, 27: (Syntax): μὲν on line 29 is answered by δὲ on line 30, not by the participial clause on line 31. So: "Just as the so-called horn-like coating of the eye has transparency, enveloping the connatural moist which is the instrument of vision, and being intermediate between the external and internal transparent, when it ceases, impedes the sight, etc."

145, 29: ὠρισμένος μὲν οὖν οὐχ ὁ περιγεγραμμένος, τοῦτο γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὁ ἔξωθεν πάθοι, ἀλλὰ τῷ ζωτικῷ ἤχῳ χαρακτηριζόμενος. "Determined' not in the sense of 'circumscribed', ... but [in the sense of] 'characterised' by vital sound". Rather than: "Determined but not circumscribed ... but it is characterised by its vital sound". (In the translation as given the exegetic nature of the sentence is lost; and it may appear to a reader as a part of a positive doctrine, which it is not).

148, 2: ἐφ' οἷς: "after which" rather than "on these".

149, 2: ἔν (and note 151, suggesting that this is a reading of the text of *de anima* that our author has): in this case we should probably understand ἔν as *de re* rather than *de dicto*. Our author says that Aristotle mentions just one function of many which suit the description of "necessary", so speaks of "one" instead of "many".

153, 20: note the meaning of ὄργανον here: not quite the "organism", but "organ" of the soul that uses it.

154, 30: ἐναποπλύνω: "being washed away" or "being dissolved" rather than "being freed"?

156, 19-20: ἐπειδὴ ἡ ἀπόφασις καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μὴ ὑποκειμένων τῷ εἶδει φέρεται: "since the negation is also applied to things which do not fall under one species" rather than "since the negation is also applied to things not falling under the form [of that sense]"?

156, 25: γευστόν: "possessing taste", "tasteable" rather than "tasty"?

160, 3: ἐπάξει γὰρ καὶ ἑτέραν: "he will add another solution"] Rather: it seems that ἑτέραν refers to ἀπορίαν and is answered at line 5: πρὸς ἣν ἡ νῦν λύσις κτλ.

161, 12-13: κατὰ τὴν κριτικὴν ἐνέργειαν ἰσταμένου: is here translated as "displaying the activity of judgment", and ἐστὼς on line 13 as "maintaining" that activity (both are much better than the "standing still at the activity of judgment").

162, 9: "unclarity" is not English, as I am told.

164, 24-25: οὕτω τὰ Περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς προσαγορεύων: "calling so the treatise On Generation and Corruption" rather than "so-called On Generation and Corruption".

166, 32: reference in the note 218 should be to note 46 rather than 44.

165, 4-15: Note 219 says that this is a criticism of the "Stoics who were talking about the impression of form into the matter". This would need some argument (as the wording is too common and does not suggest anything specifically Stoic).



167, 9: διακρίνηται: the reference to *Tim.* 67E2 in the note 234 is quite apt, but "segregate" seems imprecise. "Dilate"?

167, 31-32 and note 239: the emendation is unnecessary. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀμέριστον, ἡ δὲ ἀνελιγμένη ἐστὶν οὐσία: it explains why the qualification of λόγος suits the "user-soul" more than that of εἶδος, so ἡ δὲ can still be valid.

168, 19 and note 246: the emendation of μόνον to μόνης does not seem necessary in Greek. (The sentence as is draws a distinction between the cords being broken by a heavy strike and their harmonic effect being impeded by strike, themselves remaining intact: this is a normal exegetic elaboration.)

170, 16: κατ' ἄλλο τι: "by means of something else" (as opposed to "by themselves") rather than "in some other way" (technical distinction).

170, 22: p.211, line 13 from bottom: no "the" before the "arguments" (typographical error).

170, 22-24: ὅτι καὶ ὡς αἰσθητά ποτε δρᾷ τὰ εἶδη τῶν αἰσθητῶν, ὥστε εἰς τὸ αἰσθητικόν, καὶ ὡς μὴ αἰσθητά. "That the forms of sensible objects sometimes act as sensibles, accordingly, on what is endowed with sense, and as non-sensible" rather than: "the forms of sensible objects sometimes have an effect as sensible objects as when they act upon the sensitive, and also not as sensible objects". (Emending [note 254] ὥστε into ὅτε but translating ὡς ὅτε; but the emendation does not seem necessary.)

171, 5: προπαθεῖν: the reference in the note 258 should be to note 227 rather than 224; but neither note explains the term προπαθεῖν with respect to medium of perception (except saying that they are 'previously affected'). This might be translated as: "affected in turn" or "successively". Our author apparently refers to the progression of affection in the air and water in case of smell (and all other sensibles

## Notes:

[1.](#) For the history of the school, problems of chronology and attribution, see the following works of I. Hadot, which contain analytical reviews of literature and bibliography: I. Hadot, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiérocles et Simplicius*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978; *eiusd.*, 'La vie et l'oeuvre de Simplicius d'après des sources grecques et arabes' in *Simplicius - Sa vie, son uvre, sa survie*, ed. I. Hadot, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York, 1987, pp.3-39 (English version in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, Duckworth, London, 1990, pp.275-303), *eiusd.*, 'Introduction générale' in *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d'Épictète*. Introduction et édition critique du texte grec par I. Hadot (Brill, 1996), pp.1-182.

[2.](#) *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for his life, writings, thought and influence. Part two. Psychology, Human Physiology, Living Creatures, Botany, Ethics, Religion, Politics, Rhetoric and Poetics, Music, Miscellanea*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992. Ed. and trans. by W.W. Fortenbaugh, P.M. Huby, R.W. Sharples, D. Gutas.

[3.](#) F. Bossier, C. Steel, 'Priscianus Lydus en de 'In de anima' van Pseudo(?) -Simplicius', *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 34 (4), 1972, 761-822.

[4.](#) Cit. by Hadot 1978, p.29, n.56.

5. C.G. Steel. *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*. Brussel: Paleis der Academien, 1978.
6. Steel 1978, pp.52-73.
7. Steel 1978, pp.79-119.
8. Steel 1978, pp.38-45,
9. Steel 1997, p.111.
10. Hadot 1978, p.196.
11. *ibid.*
12. Steel, 'Introduction', p.114.
13. But cf. Hadot 1978, p.196, citing *in phys.* 283, 6, where the second of the five different senses of 'nature', 'nature as formal principle' is described by  $\kappa\alpha\theta'$  ὅ.
14. Cf. Hadot 1978, p.199.
15. Cf. Hadot 1978, pp.201-202, arguing, on the basis of the Enchiridion commentary, that Simplicius accepts this thesis.
16. Cf. Hadot 1978, p.201 and n. 45.
17. See Hadot, 'Recherches sur les fragments du commentaire de Simplicius sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote' in *Simplicius - Sa vie, son oeuvre, sa survie*, see n. 1.
18. The first reference, made in the context of the objection to Aristotle's argument that the soul never undergoes change, is to the discussion of alteration in *Physics* VII 3: 246a10. The author of the commentary cites the two processes as constitutive of the process of the soul's transformation: the temporal process of "discursive transformation" ( $\delta\iota\epsilon\chi\omicron\delta\iota\kappa\eta$  μεταβολή) and the simultaneous presence ( $\acute{\alpha}\theta\rho\omicron\alpha$  παρουσία) of the whole disposition (causally independent from, but parallel to, the process of material change); this distinction is not found in the extant commentary. The second reference occurs in the explanation of *de anima* II 5: 417a14-17 (the distinction between movement and activity). Steel suggests to emend the "fourth" for "eighth", as referring to the discussion of VIII 7 (261, 13-23) and notes that there is no such discussion in this place of Simplicius' commentary. (Cf. the appended note *ad loc.*) The third reference, at *de anima* III 2: 426b23-6, refers to the discussion of a distinction between time composed of the discrete now-moments and "natural" time which is a continuum; this discussion is apparently not in the extant *Physics* commentary.
19. Cf. Blumenthal 1982, p.74; Blumenthal 1996, p.66.
20. Other texts that can be compared are Priscian 2, 6-14 with 'Simpl.' 125, 34-126, 4; and Priscian 3, 1-20 with 'Simpl.' 126, 11- 15. There is similarity of arguments concerning the common sensibles at 4,9-5,4 Prisc. and 126, 24-127, 14 'Simpl.' Steel notices that there is correspondence in the discussion of the nature of darkness by Priscian at 8, 15-16 and 'Simpl.' at 133, 8-17, as well as the absence of this discussion from all the other Simplicius commentaries.
21. This is discussed at length in Steel 1978, p. 142-160.
22. For more hypotheses, see Blumenthal 1982, pp.93-94; Blumenthal 1996, pp.69-70.
23. Hadot 1978, pp. 1-42 and 193-202.
24. H.J. Blumenthal, 'The psychology of (?)Simplicius' Commentary on the *De anima*, *Soul and the Structure of Being in Late Neoplatonism: Syrianus, Proclus and Simplicius*. Papers and discussions of a colloquium held at Liverpool, 15-16 April 1982. H.J. Blumenthal, A.C. Lloyd, edd. Liverpool University Press, 1982, pp. 73-94.
25. H.J. Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity. Interpretations of De Anima*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996, pp.65-70.
26. Blumenthal, *op.cit.*, pp.68-69.
27. Hadot 1978, p. 202, Blumenthal 1982, p.73.
28. Hadot 1987, n.1 above.

[29.](#) See e.g. M. Tardieu, *Les paysages reliques. Routes et haltes syriennes d'Isidore à Simplicius*, Louvain-Paris, 1990. S. Van Riet, 'À propos de la biographie de Simplicius', *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, Août 1991, 506-514.

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